

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
EASTERN DIVISION**

JEREMY HOPKINS, *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

**BASSETT SERVICES HEATING &
COOLING, LLC, *et al.*,**

Defendants.

Case No. 2:24-cv-3681

Judge Edmund A. Sargus, Jr.

Magistrate Judge Elizabeth P. Deavers

ORDER

This matter is before the Court on the Parties' Joint Motion to Consent to the Jurisdiction of Magistrate Judge for All Further Proceedings. (ECF No. 29.) In this case, Plaintiffs filed claims against Defendants for violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA"), among other claims, in July 2024. (ECF No. 1.) The Parties mediated their dispute and reached a settlement agreement one year later, in July 2025. (ECF No. 26.)

FLSA lawsuits often follow a pattern: the plaintiff seeks court-authorized notice of the lawsuit to potential plaintiffs and, if the court authorizes the notice, the parties often move for the court's approval of a settlement, if one is reached. *See, e.g., Highman v. Northstar Cafe Easton, LLC*, No. 2:23-CV-1757, 2025 WL 388709, at *1 (S.D. Ohio Feb. 4, 2025) (Sargus, J.); *see also Clark v. A&L Homecare & Training Ctr., LLC*, 68 F.4th 1003, 1008 (6th Cir. 2023) (noting that FLSA cases usually settle after the court authorizes the plaintiffs to issue notice). The Parties in this case, however, jointly consented to the jurisdiction of the Magistrate Judge and moved to refer all further proceedings to her one week after the case was reported settled and before any motion for court-authorized notice or for court approval of the settlement. (ECF No. 29.)

Magistrate judges are an essential part of the federal judicial system. Just like district

judges, magistrate judges issue recorded and published decisions, and they are independent jurists in their own right. *See generally* 28 U.S.C. § 636. Under the Federal Magistrates Act, “[u]pon the consent of the parties, a full-time United States magistrate judge . . . may conduct any or all proceedings in a jury or nonjury civil matter and order the entry of judgment in the case, when specially designated to exercise such jurisdiction by the district court or courts he [or she] serves.” 28 U.S.C. § 636(c)(1). The Undersigned District Judge has never denied a joint motion to refer all proceedings to a magistrate judge after the parties consented to his or her jurisdiction.

Here, the Parties consent to magistrate judge jurisdiction for all further proceedings in this matter “[i]n the interest of judicial economy,” but they do not further explain their reasoning. (ECF No. 29.) As the Parties may be aware, some District Judges and Magistrate Judges in this Circuit have issued orders and opinions holding that court approval of FLSA settlements is not required. *See, e.g., Gilstrap v. Sushinati LLC*, 734 F. Supp. 3d 710, 714 (S.D. Ohio 2024) (Cole, J.); *Butler v. Vill. Caregiving, LLC*, No. 2:22-CV-4359, 2025 WL 1513334, at *1 (S.D. Ohio May 28, 2025) (Deavers, M.J.) (citing *Gilstrap*, 734 F. Supp. 3d at 714). Other Judges in the Sixth Circuit continue to adjudicate motions to approve FLSA settlements or have not had occasion to consider the issue. *See, e.g., Highman*, 2025 WL 388709, at *4; *Hafley v. Amtel, LLC*, No. 1:21-CV-00203, 2024 WL 2313011, at *4–5 (S.D. Ohio May 21, 2024) (Marbley, J.); *Loweth v. Revolution Trucking, LLC*, No. 1:23-CV-02438-BMB, 2025 WL 1907006, at *1 (N.D. Ohio July 10, 2025); *Dally v. Plastic Omnium Auto Inergy (USA), LLC*, No. 23-CV-10877, 2025 WL 1660360, at *2 (E.D. Mich. June 11, 2025).

The Undersigned do not accuse the Parties of seeking out a particular judge based on his or her jurisprudence. But the Undersigned Judges agree that the process for consenting to magistrate judge jurisdiction is not to be used to judge-shop. Regardless, the Undersigned are


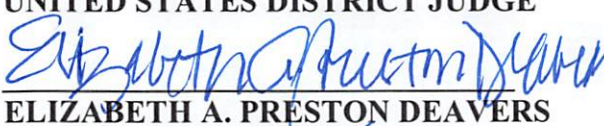
confident that either of them can aptly and timely handle the matters remaining for resolution in this case.

Accordingly, the Parties' Motion to Consent to the Jurisdiction of Magistrate Judge for All Further Proceedings is **GRANTED**, and this case is hereby **REFERRED** to United States Magistrate Judge Deavers for all further proceedings. (ECF No. 29.)

IT IS SO ORDERED.

7-29-2025
DATE

July 29, 2025
DATE


EDMUND A. SARGUS, JR.
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

ELIZABETH A. PRESTON DEAVERS
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE